

THE PLUMED KNIGHT.

The achievement of their independence by the United States, constituting a new departure in the history of the world, was, and is, a fit source of national pride, a sentiment which was at the outset sustained, at least by the great public men who had participated in the struggle, with a dignity worthy alike of themselves and their cause. In course of time, under the influence of schoolbooks carefully attuned to flattery of the national vanity, and to the perversion of history, and of the inflated oratory so dear to the American heart, what had been a lofty and justifiable pride degenerated into crude and vulgar conceit, which rapidly became insolent with the development of strength. A hundred and twelve years of ever-increasing power and dignity in the comity of nations might be supposed to have worn away the crudity of earlier years, and imparted a calm and dignified tone to the national councils, but instead of this, we are unhappily witnessing an access of the frenzy of bombast and malignity.

One of the most absurd instances of the fustian clap-trap to which our neighbours are addicted, is the application of the ridiculous epithet, "the Plumed Knight," to that exceedingly unchivalrous person, Mr. Blaine.

It is now understood that, in order to secure Mr. Blaine's withdrawal from the Presidential candidature, his own nomination, and Mr. Blaine's active support in the campaign, General Harrison has conceded to that astute politician his choice of a position in the cabinet, and a considerable proportion of nominations of officials. The demonstrations which attended Mr. Blaine's return from Europe speedily assumed so marked a character—throwing the personality of General Harrison so completely in the back ground—as to lend the strongest confirmation to this idea. If it be correct the Plumed Knight's Knighthood is of a very questionable character, a character which is confirmed by the persistent and malicious ascription to England and Canada of plans and motives which Mr. Blaine and his followers know well enough do not really exist. His chosen associates and abettors are such men as Mr. Carnegie and other iron and steel millionaire kings, whose chivalry certainly does not embrace a chivalrous estimate of their relations to the workmen in their employ. So unscrupulous are Mr. Blaine's methods that it is quite probable the more far-seeing of the Republican party may have viewed with sincere apprehension his actual candidature for the Presidency. Unfortunately, should they win the day, Mr. Blaine's position as the irreparable power behind the throne will allow him perhaps even a wider scope for mischief than his actual occupation of it. Should his party, on the other hand, sustain defeat, it is to be hoped, and may reasonably be predicted, that his prestige will vanish, his influence decline, and that we shall hear but little more of him in the future.

RETALIATION.

The motive of President Cleveland and his advisers in sending his Retaliation Message to Congress is probably two-fold. It has been forced upon him by the campaign necessity of taking the wind out of the sails of the Republicans, and we take it he has not been averse to reading the Senate a lesson in logic. As regards the treaty which that body saw fit to reject, both Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Bayard considered it a fair measure, and the assumptions now put forth in the message, of the vexatious course pursued by Canada, are too palpably artificial, and adopted for the sake of consistency with the new departure compelled by party exigencies, to weigh against the evident sincerity of their first declaration. It is to be regretted that Mr. Cleveland has been obliged to descend to the level of his opponents, but yet greater unpleasantness to Canada might be the result of their scoring a catch-point against him. The attitude the United States Government has been made to assume is a humiliating spectacle, but as continued discussion continues to elicit new points, it becomes more and more probable that the results of the move will not be very mischievous.

As regards the merits of the contention, the mutual asseverations of Canada and the United States that the interests of each have been shamefully surrendered to the other, would alone suffice to indicate the fairness of the treaty. But the treaty is not now the chief grievance. The canal-tolls are also pressed into the service, but the real offence is the Canadian Railway competition. In all the disputed points the President's message accuses Canada of narrowness; and assumes for Americans as rights, privileges which are clearly matters of concession only, and it is impossible that Canadians can blind themselves to the offensive inference running through it, that Canada has really no sort of right to embark in any kind of enterprise, protect any of her industries, or in the meekest way assert any rights of her own, if they happen to be in the slightest degree distasteful to the high mightiness of our neighbors. They, on the other hand, bemoan themselves to the skies for a forbearance and generosity in the treatment of international questions which we are entirely unable to discern.

It is noticeable that Mr. Cleveland's message is couched in somewhat general terms, the fallacy of which protrudes directly we come to analyze the alleged grievances.

Thus, when equal canal privileges were conceded to the United States, they were to be reciprocated. The U. S. Government certainly did grant the use of the St. Clair Canal, which is controlled by the Federal Government; but the Federal Government was to urge on the State Governments of New York and Michigan the granting of the same privileges on their canals. Whether urged or not, those States have never granted the privileges which Canada at once conceded at the request of the British Government.

With respect to the transshipment of fish, Mr. Cleveland pronounced a treaty "fair and just" by which Canada would have granted that advantage in return for the free admission of Canadian fish to the United States. That the President now demands it as a right, and asks for power to retaliate if it

is not granted, almost amounts to proof that the position taken in the message is insincere. The question is indeed treated in a disingenuous way, the rescension in 1885 of the privilege to American fish, being stated without the slightest mention of the condition on which it might have been retained.

The frequent insistence on "our liberality and generous considerations" (of which we presume the Behring Sea seizures are instances) is farcical in view of the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty with the transparent design of spiting the British Provinces. The Americans very well know, that to allow their fishermen to tranship their catches from our ports to the United States, without the free admission of our fish to American markets, simply means the destruction of the Canadian fishing interest.

If the penalty for protecting our rights is to be the prohibition of the transit of Canadian goods in bond over United States Railways, some loss and inconvenience will doubtless ensue to Canada, but it is quite evident that many mitigating, if not corresponding advantages will accrue to our Atlantic ports. On the other hand, we have hardly yet begun to hear the voices of those American shippers, whose interests will suffer quite as much as, if not more than, our own, by retaliatory measures, and we incline to the belief that so much demur will spring up in all directions that we shall very probably witness no serious attempt to use the powers the President seeks to have enlarged. The whole affair is campaign clap-trap, though of a highly dangerous nature, but it is in the power of Canada to minimize the danger by the resolute maintenance of a calm unretaliative attitude. Above all, we very earnestly hope the Government will consult the true dignity of the country by steadfastly declining to disturb the *modus vivendi* during the continuance of the present fishing season.

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION.

Emperor William has been "swinging round the circle" of the neighboring States, and it seems in order to look into apparent results. When he visited the Czar, and afterwards King Christian of Denmark, there was much kissing, embracing, and saluting, and every possible demonstration of esteem, affection and good will, but there were many indications that nearly all this display was merely surface.

In Copenhagen, the people were cool, if not absolutely sullen, even though their King was obsequious enough. It does not appear that there was any personal dislike or repugnance to the young Emperor, but merely a national feeling arising out of the Schleswick-Holstein affair of 1864. The humiliation of Denmark in that matter pierced the hearts of the Danes, and they will never forget it, or cease to hope that some lucky chance may some day occur to give them an opportunity to recover their lost territory, and to avenge the defeat of that war.

The manner of that loss was such as to touch to the quick the Danish national feeling of honor. Their gallant little army waged a most heroic resistance for ten long weeks against the combined hordes of Prussia and Austria, but were beaten down by sheer weight of numbers. This feeling rankles, and will probably never be allayed while Germany holds possession of the territory and Denmark remains a nation. The Danes look hopefully towards Russia. They argue with some plausibility that the Czar may be expected to sympathise with them, as he is the representative of the house of Holstein-Gottorp, and also because his wife is a daughter of the Danish King, Christian 9th. It is noteworthy that during the recent visit of William to Alexander, no restriction was placed on the Russian press in regard to the discussion of the Schleswick-Holstein question. Germany has been put in rather an unpleasant position by the utterances of the continental papers, which declare boldly that Schleswick-Holstein was wrongfully taken from Denmark and Alsace Lorraine from France. These topics are naturally and inevitably of a disturbing sort. If Germany should restore to Denmark its old duchy, and to France the provinces that were once hers, there would of course and unquestionably be peace; but there is not the remotest possibility that she will ever do so voluntarily. Indeed, the German official papers openly and boldly declare that these provinces can only be separated from Germany by a successful war with France and Russia as the attacking nations. Of course, France would be only too glad to have a chance to obtain revenge, and to get back her lost territory. It is not so clear that the Government of Russia would consider it wise policy to enter upon such a scheme. They are cautious, and will not fight for fun, or merely out of a sentimental or chivalrous desire to help little Denmark on the one hand, or France on the other. She will weigh very carefully every possible contingency before committing herself, especially as the least move would probably bring on a general conflict all over Europe. Austria's position can hardly be considered doubtful, for if she allowed Germany to be beaten her turn would surely come next, and, with the conglomeration of nationalities which compose her empire, disruption would be comparatively easy. There are also strong indications that Italy and Turkey would join the Germano-Austrian combination rather than their foes. Besides, Great Britain might be drawn in, and in that case she would doubtless take the same side, and thus paralyze France. More important to Russia is the consideration that it would stop the carrying out of her plans for the consolidation and extension of her eastern empire.

At present Germany may rest secure in the possession of these territories, and it should be borne in mind that the Holsteiners and half Schleswick are German-speaking, while the claim of Germany has been maintained from time to time since the ninth century.

The Emperor is about to visit Rome, and probably Vienna, but it is not likely that he will go to Paris this year at any rate!

In reference to Mr. Crofton's article in last week's CRITIC, Sir E. Taché said that the last shot fired in defense of British connection would be fired by a French Canadian.